

We know that hunger is a health issue, and that is especially true among seniors over the age of 60. Research from Feeding America suggests that, compared to their food-secure neighbors, seniors suffering from hunger are 60 percent more likely to experience depression, 53 percent more likely to report a heart attack, 52 percent more likely to develop asthma, and 40 percent more likely to report an experience of congestive heart failure.

Baby boomers spend twice as much on health care as young adults do. Ensuring seniors have access to nutritious food is vitally important. We know that seniors have unique nutritional needs, and I am pleased to see scientists collaborating to create nutritional guidance for seniors.

Researchers at the Jean Mayer USDA Human Nutrition Research Center on Aging at Tufts University, with support from the AARP Foundation, recently unveiled an updated MyPlate for Older Adults graphic to help seniors visualize what foods cover the nutritional needs that make up a healthy plate for adults their age. The new icon also encourages them to follow healthy eating patterns.

I was pleased to join scientists from Tufts as well as representatives of AARP last week at a briefing on Capitol Hill to unveil the new MyPlate icon and educate congressional staff on the importance of senior nutrition.

But if we want to ensure seniors have access to nutritious foods, we must also ensure that they have the ability to afford fruits, vegetables, and other healthy options. One critical step we can take toward the goal of ending senior hunger is closing what is referred to as the “senior SNAP gap.”

While millions of our parents, grandparents, teachers, and friends are facing hunger, only a fraction of low-income seniors eligible for food assistance through SNAP are accessing the benefits, presumably because of the stigma associated with assistance, or because seniors are unaware they qualify for benefits.

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Many seniors also suffer from limited mobility or may have issues completing benefit applications, which can be complex and very time-consuming. In fact, seniors are more likely than any other age group to be eligible for SNAP, but they are not enrolled to receive the benefits.

That is why I am pleased to see so many advocacy organizations using Older Americans Month to call attention to the issue of senior hunger. Through their hashtag Solve Senior Hunger campaign, Feeding America and other antihunger and -aging organizations across the country are reaching out to seniors and their loved ones to raise awareness and ensure that those seniors who are eligible to receive SNAP benefits are connected to the appropriate resources.

We should do all we can to help solve senior hunger by talking to our family

members and friends about senior hunger and by partnering with leaders in our communities who work to improve access to nutritious food for senior populations.

During my years in Congress, I have had the opportunity to visit food banks and other organizations in my district that are working to end hunger among seniors. Last year I had the privilege of spending a day with a Meals on Wheels program that is based in Northampton, Massachusetts, which is part of my congressional district. I helped to prepare and deliver meals and had the opportunity to speak with seniors who were served through this incredible program.

Members of Congress have an important role in ensuring our Nation's seniors don't go hungry. I encourage all of my colleagues to spend time with similar programs in their districts.

Congress must adequately fund programs like Meals on Wheels, which provides nutritious food to seniors, and reject harmful cuts to SNAP, which will disproportionately harm the most vulnerable among us: children, seniors, and the disabled.

That hunger is still a big problem in America, the richest country in the history of the world, and it should make us all ashamed. But, in working together, we have the power to end hunger now, especially among our senior population. Let's act now.

VENEZUELA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) for 5 minutes.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise to discuss the ongoing crisis in Venezuela due to the incompetence of its leader, Nicolas Maduro. No matter what Maduro says, the crisis is his fault, not the fault of the U.S., not the fault of the Organization of American States. Maduro and his corrupt cronies are the ones to blame for this disaster—no one else.

While the Obama administration has sometimes tried to concede to the Maduro regime, it has only been reciprocated with no real positive change or any way forward by Maduro. Even now, the U.S. Embassy in Caracas has had to suspend appointments for Venezuelans who seek first-time tourist and business visas due to staff shortages that it blames on Maduro.

This is just the tip of the iceberg, Mr. Speaker. For a country that is rich in oil reserves, it is the sign of incompetence and corruption that Venezuela is struggling with empty grocery stores, shortages of medicine, high inflation, and a plummeting economy.

Now Maduro is trying desperately to receive assistance from other countries to save his corrupt regime. India has offered medicine in exchange for Venezuelan oil, and China may offer loans to Venezuela in exchange for oil. But these attempts are possibly too late,

and Venezuela may not be able to survive this incredible economic downward spiral.

To put it simply, Mr. Speaker, Venezuela is on the verge of total collapse, and what an impact that will have throughout our hemisphere. It is not a matter of if. It is a matter of when.

On top of that, Venezuela is also facing medical shortages that have become a humanitarian crisis. Recently, a group of Venezuelan legislative members were in D.C., meeting with us to ask for humanitarian assistance for their people and for medical supplies to take care of the sick in Venezuela.

Now, these members are the opposition of Nicolas Maduro, but they know that Maduro doesn't care about helping the people, so they are rising up to the chore.

The Venezuelan Medical Federation has asked the Maduro regime to accept humanitarian aid in order to handle the massive shortages of medicine in the country, a request that has not been agreed upon by Maduro. The Venezuelan Neurology Society reported that the shortage of medicines for neurological conditions has reached around 90 percent.

The Venezuelan National Assembly has declared a humanitarian health crisis that includes the lack of 872 essential medications. In April, the Venezuelan newspaper *El Nacional* reported that the Venezuelan Pharmaceutical Federation declared that the shortage of medicines in pharmacies has reached 85 percent.

The lack of medicine, Mr. Speaker, impacts people from all walks of life, from the elderly, to the sick, to the mentally ill, to the children who cannot receive lifesaving care.

Individuals with serious illnesses have to go from pharmacy to pharmacy, looking for the medicines. If they don't find them, they either have to leave the country or try to smuggle the medicines in through the underground black market. The situation in Venezuela can also quickly become more violent and even more dangerous if the crisis is not resolved quickly.

Maduro has issued emergency decrees, even though the National Assembly rejected it, that will help him consolidate even more of his power. Power? Maduro doesn't care about the food and medicine for the people. All he cares about is having more power.

Last week Venezuela launched its biggest military exercise. Who is invading Venezuela? Why did he do it? To scare the population and to show the Venezuelan people his military might so as to prevent any protests by the people. At the same time, the Venezuelan National Assembly has called for its own country to be suspended from the Organization of American States.

The crisis in Venezuela must wake up others in the region. The new leaders of Argentina and Brazil are needed to bring the Southern Cone together in the name of regional stability.

Where is the leadership in the United States? President Obama has yet to add more names of human rights violators in Venezuela. Adding names would prevent them from coming to the United States. This is a list that is based on a law that I passed along with my Senate colleague, Senator MARCO RUBIO. That law is going to expire, and we need to extend it a few more years because those rights are being violated every day.

I talked about the economic hardships, but let's talk about the political and human rights violations that are going on every day in Maduro's Venezuela—they are committed by the Maduro regime—including the unconscionable imprisonment of Leopoldo Lopez and scores of pro-democracy activists.

The dire situation in Venezuela, Mr. Speaker, is out of control. Let's see what we can do because the Venezuelan people deserve better than a corrupt Maduro.

ASIAN PACIFIC AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from California (Ms. JUDY CHU) for 5 minutes.

Ms. JUDY CHU of California. Mr. Speaker, the month of May is recognized as Asian Pacific American Heritage Month, an important time to celebrate our Nation's rich cultural diversity as well as the many accomplishments and contributions of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders all across our country.

Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders are now the fastest growing racial group in the country, and today more immigrants come from Asia than from any other region in the world.

As chair of the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus, or CAPAC, I have seen these growing numbers reflected here in Congress, where we now have 14 Asian American and Pacific Islander Members of Congress, which is a historic high.

We have also seen these numbers reflected in the diversity of our Federal workforce as well as in the Federal judiciary, where we have more than tripled the number of Asian Pacific American judges who serve on the Federal bench.

This includes the historic nomination of Sri Srinivasan to the U.S. District Court of Appeals, which is extremely notable because it is the court from which many U.S. Supreme Court Justices have risen, and we know that it is only a matter of time before we have our first Asian American Supreme Court Justice.

In addition to working to diversify our Federal workforce, we in CAPAC have the privilege to advocate for the priorities and concerns of Asian Pacific Americans on a broad range of issues, from combating racial profiling, to keeping immigrant families together

through comprehensive immigration reform, to ensuring that all Americans can access the ballot box and have a voice in our democracy.

Today far too many in the Asian Pacific American community are being profiled because of the way they look or the religion they practice, and whether they are Chinese Americans who are being singled out for economic espionage or are Muslim or Sikh Americans who are wrongfully perceived as terrorists, we know that profiling creates a culture of suspicion that not only breeds mistrust, but that also endangers the lives and livelihoods of innocent Americans.

Take the recent case of a Chinese American scientist who was wrongly targeted as a spy for China. One terrible morning, Professor Xiaoxing Xi woke up to see guns pointed at him and 12 FBI agents arresting him in front of his wife, two daughters, and the whole neighborhood. They dragged him off to jail, accused him of being a spy for China, and threatened him with 80 years in jail. It turned out that the FBI agents were wrong. So they dropped all charges, but not before ruining Professor Xi's life.

We have also seen this happen in the case of Sherry Chen, a hydrologist at the National Weather Service of Ohio, who was arrested in front of her co-workers and was accused of being a spy for China, only to have her case dismissed.

Asian American scientists and engineers, who have worked hard to get their advanced degrees and be successful in their careers, now live in fear that they, too, may be next.

As CAPAC's chair, I have made it a priority to fight back against these injustices. We have met with Attorney General Loretta Lynch to demand answers to these cases. We have held press conferences, have written letters, and have questioned the FBI and the Department of Justice during congressional hearings. We know we must speak up.

In fact, we need only to look at the horrors of what happened to innocent Japanese Americans who were imprisoned during World War II to know what can happen when we remain silent. That is why it is so important for diverse communities to have a voice in our democracy.

Today the ability for us to make a difference is enormous, and we in CAPAC are working hard to ensure that Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders have access to the ballot box through our efforts to restore the Voting Rights Act.

Nationally, Asian Pacific Americans have doubled our voter registration numbers over the last decade from 2 million to 4 million people, and, by 2040, we will have doubled even those numbers. We are the sleeping giant. In fact, Asian Pacific Americans have gone from being marginalized to being the margin of victory.

As we celebrate Asian Pacific American Heritage Month this May, let us

remember not only the many contributions of the Asian American and Pacific Islander community, but also the challenges that we must continue to confront in order to ensure that all Americans, regardless of race, ethnicity, religion, or language ability, can achieve the American Dream.

Happy Asian Pacific American Heritage Month.

LATINO EMERGENCY COUNCIL'S 10-YEAR ANNIVERSARY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California (Mr. DENHAM) for 5 minutes.

Mr. DENHAM. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize the Latino Emergency Council as we celebrate their tenth-year anniversary. Since their founding in 2006, they have provided exemplary service in promoting emergency preparedness and communication with the Latino community in Stanislaus County, California.

The LEC was conceived in the fall of 2005 as a partnership between the Stanislaus County Hispanic Leadership Council, El Concilio, and the County of Stanislaus. The initial goal was to formalize a communication channel with leadership from the Latino community and the Stanislaus County Office of Emergency Services in the event of an emergency.

The organization is a leader in emergency communication response as well as in personal emergency preparedness. The LEC distributes emergency preparedness information throughout the community in nonemergency situations and offers training to the community as a means of building community capacity and self-reliance in emergency situations.

The LEC has assisted in multiple emergency responses, such as the H1N1 swine flu outbreak, heat emergencies, the West Nile virus, and cold weather situations.

They also participate in multiple disaster exercises, translate vital information into Spanish, provide training for underserved community members, and perform outreach throughout Stanislaus County by distributing tens of thousands of pieces of literature in Spanish.

Organization members also travel to the FEMA Region IX office in Oakland, California, and in Washington, D.C., and advocate for emergency preparedness capacity in the Latino community.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in honoring and in recognizing the Latino Emergency Council for their service and outstanding contributions to the Latino community as they celebrate their tenth-year anniversary. They are an example of how amazing things can be done when people come together with passion and purpose to make change in the local community.